

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, September 17, 2003

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Governor Turns Down Bi-Partisan Offer To Negotiate Executive Order

Sikkema: Lack of Legislature's Involvement Threatens Reorganization Plan

LANSING – Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema today said a plan to reorganize the Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services (CIS) might be rejected because of the Granholm administration's refusal to negotiate major points of difference in the proposal.

"We have major differences with what the governor is proposing that seriously jeopardize legislative approval of her proposal," said Sikkema, R-Wyoming. "I personally offered to work on a bi-partisan, inclusive proposal that all sides could accept, but the administration has decided to move forward with a plan without input from Republican leaders."

Sikkema said he spoke with administration officials on Friday, expressing his concerns over the proposed CIS reorganization. In particular, Sikkema said he and fellow Republicans are opposed to plans that abolish the Workers Compensation Appellate Commission, among other issues. The commission handles appeals of Workers Compensation decisions and was created in 1985 by Democrat Gov. James Blanchard to reduce a 7,000-case backlog. The commission was successful in eliminating the backlog and remains efficient at disposing of appeals in a timely manner.

Governor Granholm's executive order, which she released today, is subject legislative approval. But Sikkema said lawmakers may only approve or reject the proposal once it is presented, leaving no opportunity for amendment or compromise.

"The time to reach a bi-partisan agreement on the major government restructuring plan, unfortunately, has passed," Sikkema said. "Now we are forced to accept or reject the plan

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without input from lawmakers. As the proposal stands now, I cannot foresee a positive outcome for it.”

Under Michigan’s Constitution, executive orders that reorganize a government agency may be rejected by the state House and Senate before taking effect. Lawmakers have 60 days to approve or reject such an order once presented with it.